

20, scattering the bones and feathers among the bones in the drawer. She experimented with his diet, finding that he liked fish as well as meat and getting small fish from the lake in return.

She altered the patterns of her living. Coming to the window before dawn to see him bring the food, preparing what he brought and sitting with him to eat, feeling very tired after he left and, as a consequence, sleeping through the middle of the day, writing her articles in the evening, and spending much of the night trying to see what was happening in the dark yard or sitting transfixed, looking into the night sky.

As winter ended they ate with the window open, and she tried talking. Her language did not interest him. When she was most silent, he would make his own quiet sounds. She began to imitate him until they developed a rudimentary set of signals for welcome, for satisfaction or curiosity about the food, for mutual approval. She invited him in, but he refused. She understood that he did not want her to touch him.

By spring two drawers were filled with bones, feathers, and other remnants of the food he had brought, and she started scattering them on the floor. She was spending every night at the window, feeling her sharpened teeth, the new thin strength in her fingers, the keenness of smell drawing her forward. She talked only to him.

She spent the first warm night seated in the window, her fingers and toes curled over the edge of the sill, her chin on her knees, or stretched out above the yard to see an animal below, a bat, his flight. At dawn he brought her a small cat not yet dead. She snapped its spine, pinned it to the sill with her fingernails, bit into the warm flesh through the fur on its back, chewed, looked up, snapped her head once to the left, and jumped out of the window of her dark apartment into the free bright air of the morning.

-- Michael R. Brown

Chicago IL

AWAKE OR ASLEEP

tours are booked out for papua & samoa & the new hebrides, then the tourists come back unable to speak, they cannot remember their holiday, all they have left is a vague

sense of movement, echo & sway, moving from ship to ship, then having watched TV documentaries on UFO sightings, unable to tell the difference between the TV studios & the holiday resort, awake or asleep, a man is badly bashed with an iron bar by three men who are trying to rob him at the railway station, the victim is admitted to the hospital with head injuries. A man is waiting at the station for a train to take him to work, he is interviewed by news media controlled by the relevant authorities, he refers to a "blinding white light" & "changing colors" & "changing direction." The news story goes out by AAP reuter & the stations wait eagerly for the ratings, the ratings go up, each station feels differently, the executives send telegrams.

THE ASIANS

it is morning a new pope is elected on time, it is 8 minutes past 10, the TV commercials are printed on paper, the asians tell the rest of the world to take a walk, to go fly a kite, for all your ideas are worth, a powerful current is fed into the aerial setting up an impedance matching stage, the news of the new pope is repeated in microwave code, it is 8 minutes past 10, the papers have banner headlines, all the catholics are pleased with themselves, the asians divide their governments, refugees are told to take a walk, they are passed onto another country to make good, the embassy is attacked, splinters of glass sail through the air for a distance of 40 feet, there are reports of injured, on a seafront about 3 km away from where Syrian troops are locked in battle, the sound of gunfire is not heard on the re-run of the film, because of the skip distance, the sound travelling slower than the images. The station prints an apology & says the public will have to take our word for it that the action is authentic.

-- Robert Whyte

Paddington, Queensland, Australia

PERSONAL MYTHOLOGY

Jumbled in memory the mythical figures
of my personal pantheon are never
more than human, jostling over the years
towards no lofty pinnacle or noble goal.